RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 23rd February, 1994/4th Phalguna, 1915 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the Clock. Mr. Chairman *in the chair*

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Correspondence with Chief Minister of West Bengal Regarding Wagon Orders

21. SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI.†
SHRI ASHIS SEN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any correspondence from the Chief Minister of West Bengal regarding wagon orders;

(b) if so, what are the salient features of the said letter; and

(c) the steps if any, taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K.C. LENKA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

Correspondence with Chief Minister of West Bengal regarding Wagon orders

(b) The Chief Minister of West Bengal in his letters had highlighted the problems being faced by wagon building and ancillary units in the Public and Private Sectors including units located in West Bengal due to reduction and delay in placement of wagon orders for the period upto March' 94.

(c) Railways conducted a review of wagon requirements in keeping with traffic trends and decided to restrict the wagon off-take based on actual needs to 20000 four wheelers against 22500 four wheelers initially budgetted. The orders have since been released for this level of off-take.

SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister in his statement has said that the Chief Minister of West Bengal had highlighted the problems being faced by wagon building and ancillary units in the public and private sectors including units located in West Bengal due to reduction and delay in placement of wagon orders for the period up to March, 1994. But there is no mention in his statement about how many orders for wagons have been placed with wagon manufacturing industries in West Bengal? There is no mention about wagon manufacturing units in West Bengal.

Sir, wagon manufacturing units in West Bengal both public and private sectors are in a deep crisis. Railways are not placing orders in time and the volume of orders has decreased considerably leading to under-utilisation of the installed capacity of the industries as a whole and their ancillary units also. The uncertainty related to wagon orders hangs heavily over the fate of thousands of workers. Apprehension looms large on the minds of the workers that at any moment of time they will be thrown out of jobs. The Minister is quite aware of the fact that Burns Standard with its two factories, Braithwaite Texmaco, Saxby Farmer, Britannia, Stone India, Balmer Lorry, Jessop and Siemens are industries of reputation for manufacturing rolling stock and air-brake components.

The Chief Minister of West Bengal again on 2nd February had sent a telegram to the hon. Railway Minister, Mr. Jaffer Sharief urgmg him to release orders for wagons immediately for the first quarter of 1994. Not only that, Workmen's Union of Hindustan Development Corporation had sent an appeal to the Railway Minister, Finance

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† The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ramnarayan Goswami.

Minister and the Commerce Minister for placement of orders for wagons recently.

In this connection, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether orders have been issued for condemnation of wagons during the last two years; For how many wagons orders have been released by the Railway Board during this period?

Part (b) of my supplementary is—how many units have been nominated by the Railway Board for the manufacture of air-brake components? What is the volume of orders placed? If so, unit-wise details?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think you have exhausted your second supplementary also.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member has referred to two aspects. One is about wagon building and the other is about air-brake components. The second aspect doesn't relate to this question. So, I will confine myself to the. wagon building industry. As rightly pointed out by the hon. Member, four wagon building industries are located in the State of West Bengal. Railways always work out their requirements of each Plan period and allocations are made accordingly and orders are also placed with the industry according to the requirements.

Particularly, in the Eighth Plan period, orders have been issued in the last two or three years and this year also. There has been some delay in issuing the orders. When the traffic offering came down, naturally, the Railways had to look into the reguirement of wagons. Our investment is totally a need-based one. We cannot go on investing. I do appreciate that there are industries which depend on the Railways. *{Interruptions).* In any case, we cannot go on investing. Investment has to be based on the requirement. We took a little time for the reassessment of our requirement. Based on the requirement, we issued orders on 31.1.1994, as follows:

Public Sector		
BHEL/MFP	—	985
BHEL/MKA	—	1235
Braith Waite/MFP	—	2120
Burn/Bumpur	—	2420
Burn/Howrah	—	2005
Jessop	—	485
Private Sector		
CIMMCO	—	2065
HGI	—	950
Modem	—	1110
Texmaco	—	3200
HDC	—	1925

We have issued orders like this on 31.1.1994 which is very recent. There is nothing which we have not done. In fact, in our assessment, based on the traffic requirement, our need has been reduced by 2,000 to 22,500. Sharing this among the various public-sector and private-sector units, we have been able to place orders as above.

SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI: My first supplementary was, how many wagons had been condemned by the Railway Board during this period?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: It is an annual exercise. Our requirement will be based on both what we condemn and what we acquire a new on the basis of traffic. When we make an assessment of what we require, it is based on both these factors; the replacement after condemning .... *(Interruptions)...*and what we need more, the total requirement ...*(Interruptions)...*

SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI: I want to know from you the specific number ...*(Interruptions)...*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, if the number is not with you now, you can give the number to the Member later.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Sir, I do not have the figures. I will secure them.

SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMi. My second supplementary would be this For how many wagons orders have been placed with the Gwalior-based CMMCO and the Faridabad-based Escores?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARJEF: I have already given the figure for CIMMCO. It is 2265. For Escorts, the answer is 'no'.

SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI: Part (b) of my second supplementary is..... *(Interruptions).* Sir, kindly permit me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your second supplementary is over. Shri Ashis Sen.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: Sir, the Minister has explained that the placing of wagon orders is need-based. The need is assessed on the basis of the replacement of the condemned wagons and the new requirement. He is not in a position to give the Figures with regard to that. Unfortunately, the Minister does not have the figures. The original plan was to buy 24,000 wagons. He says that suddenly within a few months, the need has reduced to 22,500. Even with regard to 22,500 wagons, proper orders have not been placed. Now orders were given in respect of 10,750 wagons up to April 1993. Subsequently, when there was a pressure from Members of Parliament and trade unions, orders in respect of 4,500 wagons were given. We find that the actual order was placed for 3,750 wagons though the assessment was for 4,500 or 5,000 wagons. 1 would like to know the reason for not placing orders in respect of 1250 wagons, What is the reason for that? Now, one point which comes up here is that we have got no dispute.....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please ask your question.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: I am coming to that. Why has the Department not placed orders in respect of 1250 wagons which were a part of the original assessment? It has to be borne in mind that non-placement of orders mean that about 60,000 workers who are associated with this industry and the ancillary industry, are without jobs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you please frame it as a question instead of making a statement? I will give you half-a-minute more.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: I am asking the Minister to reconsider the whole matter and see that the orders are placed effectively. Otherwise, the idleness of workers will cause a lot of problems. In order to avoid that situation he has to see that the orders are placed immediately. Is the Minister prepared to do that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have to conclude now.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: Now, I would put my second supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. You have asked your question. Now, let the Minister reply.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: I would like to know whether we are importing wagons from foreign countries. This is one of the main questions I want to know from the Minister. If so, has the order been placed? When our industries are not being utilised fully, we are asking the foreign countries to make the supply. What did happen in the engine deal? I would like to know whether we are placing orders on the foreign countries.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Sir, the present order that has already been placed with the wagon industry is based on what we require. As I have already said, our investment is need-based investment, so, after taking into account what is being condemned or after taking into account what the requirement of wagons is for movement of traffic, we have arrived at this figure and whatever is our requirement, we have distributed it among the public and private sector

industries. We have already placed the orders. There is nothing more that I can add to that. With regard to the import of wagons, I would like to inform the hon. Member that there is no such thing like that. There was an offer from Spain for the containers and it is not that we are interested in purchasing them. There was a deal they wanted to purchase metre gauge rolling stock, the locomotives, the wagons and the coaches and in turn, they wanted to sell some of their container wagons to us. If that works out to be cheaper than what we manufacture here and if they are really interested to buy our rolling stock, then it is a deal which one can consider. But nothing has happened. That was only an offer and nothing more has happened on that. If anything materialises, then I will inform the House.

SHRI ASHIS SEN: Sir, when our wagon industry is suffering, in order to accommodate the wagon industry of another country, we have to import from them. What does it mean?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: If the hon. Member yields, I would inform him about this. It is all right for the hon. Member, who is interested in some of the industries in West Bengal, to say like this. *(Interruptions)* But we, as a country, have to look to the world market. If our products are going to be purchased by other countries, I do not think there is *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: What will happen to the employees? *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Mitra. .....*(Interruptions)*..... Dr. Mitra, I give you a chance to ask a question.

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: I am sorry, we have a great provocation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Mitra, are you asking a question? You have sent your name. Are you asking a supplementary? I have your name here.

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Yes, Sir; this is my question. I would very humbly ask the Minister of Railways whether he has had any consultation with the Ministry of Industry in the planning of purchases from public sector units as well as private sector units in the heavy industry sector, the light industry sector and the ancillary sector so that the overall interests of the national including the interests of that employees, are taken care of and the criterion that a balanced industrial and economic development takes place all over the country, is satisfied. If in lieu of that you take a totally cynical view that West Bengal's problem is West Bengal's only, then we have ways and ways of also dealing with this praticular situation.

Sorry.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: I have no language for his answer.

THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN): Sir, I think these words should not go on record. .....*(Interruptions)*.... What do you mean by saying what do you mean by this?

(Interruptions)

SHRI M.D. SALIM: The Minister's answer for his supplementary was this!

SHRI S.B. CHAVAN: But this is highly objectionable.

(Interruptions)

SHRI M.D. SALIM: Because it is the problem of .....West Bengal, ...*(Interruptions)*.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you please sit down? ..... *(Interruptions)* ..... Dr. Mitra, will you please sit down?

(Interruptions)

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: This Minister is not replying to my supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. I think what you said is not really relevant to this question at all. I rule that that sentence should not be in the records.

(Interruptions)

*Expunged as ordered by the chair.

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:*

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. .....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ASHIS SEN: His question was gentlemanly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no; one has to be gentlemanly in the House. So you cannot say that.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Sir, he has not replied to the first part of the quesiton.....*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. I have called the next speaker, ...*(Interruptions)*..... No, no; I have ruled it out. So you don't have to press the matter again.

श्री चतुरानन मिश्रः सभापति महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या रेलवे मंत्रालय ने इस को वर्क आउट किया है कि यह एक साल का है कि 500 वैगंस कम उत्पादन किया जाएगा या सक्सीडिंगली आने वाले वर्षों में इसी तरह से रिड्यूस किया जाएगा? क्या आप के मंत्रालय ने कोई ऐस्टिमेट वर्क आउट किया है कि आगे ऐसा होने वाला है क्योंकि कंट्री रेपिडली प्रोग्रेस करने वाला है? क्या वैगंस इसी तरह घटने वाला है?

If that is so, let the House know about it. Am I clear?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Sir, I am sorry, I do not agree with the hon. Member.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Sir, there is no question of agreeing. I have simply asked whether the Minister has worked out.....*(Interruptions)*

श्री सी०के० जाफर शरीफः मुझे बोलने दीजिए। (व्यवधान)

श्री चतुरानन मिश्रः आपने कहा कि ऐसी नहीं कर रहे हैं, इस लिए मैंने कहा.....(व्यवधान)

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Sir, we are an optimistic country. We look to the bright future of the country. If, for some reason, there is no traffic and we have revised our requirements, it does not mean that we are going backwards.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: I have not asked anything in details of it. Why he is giving all the details. I have simply asked him whether the Ministry has worked out the need of new wagons in the coming years or it is only his optimism—to reduce wagon orders. Then I don't share his optimism. I simply wanted to know whether you have worked out that you are going to reduce it progressively or not. What is the actual position? Let the House know about it.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: It is a one-time affair for a particular period because the traffic went down.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Is it only for one year?

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Yes. We have been finalising the orders in consultation with the Wagon India Limited which is under the Ministry of Industry. We consult them, we plan out and then place orders. There is nothing like not taking the Industry Ministry into confidence in these cases.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 22 .... *(Interruptions)* .....

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: My question has not been answered. I wanted to know whether the Minister has worked it out for subsequent years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When the Minister has said that he has not worked it out for all times, he means to say that he has worked it out for the time being.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: I have not asked whether he has worked it out for all times. I only asked whether in the case of subsequent years the Minister has worked it out or not. Is it only a onetime affair or is it going to go on like this? Have they worked it out or not? That is what I wanted to know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, I think you said that you have not worked it out on a long-term basis. Is this what you meant?

*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF: We make projections for the Plan period. Every year we make a separate assessment of the requirement and then we place orders.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 22

Meetings of Ministers on Kashmir issue

*22. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had convened a meeting of a group of Ministers on Kashmir on February, 2, 1994 to evolve a new development policy in respect of that State;

(b) if so, what was the precise outcome thereof; and

(c) what follow-up action has been taken in the light thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN): (a) No meeting of the Group of Ministers on Kashmir was held on February, 2, 1994.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

श्री सुशीलकुमार संभाजीराव शिन्दे: महोदय, मैं प्रथमत: प्रधान मंत्री और भारत सरकार को बधाई देना चाहता हूं.....(व्यवधान) बधाई इसलिए देना चाहता हूं कि हजरत बल के इशू, हजरतबाल के क्राइसेज पर पूरे देश में ही नहीं पूरी दुनिया में एक ऐसा हंगामा मच गया था उसमें शांतिपूर्वक एक भी मृत्यु के बिना.....(व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please ask your question.

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: It has reference to the Committee. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Committee was appointed after this incident had taken place and thereby one has to see the records of the Committee and thereby its relevance.

एक तो हजरतबल के बारे में जो एक विकट प्रश्न था उसके बारे में सरकार ने पूरे देश को बता दिया कि भारत सरकार शांति से काम कर सकती है.....(व्यवधान)

THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): Are you going to convert this House into a club for mutual admiration? What are the rules? Let him ask the question ..... *(Interruptions)*.....

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I need your protection. I have every light as a Member ..... *(Interruptions)*.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put your question instead of making a speech..... *(Interruptions)*.....

SHRI..... SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: The Government has done an excellent work — *(Interruptions)* .....

SHRI D1GVIJAY SINGH: Only supplementary,..... not flattery ..... *(interruptions)* .....

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHA JIRAO SHINDE: i do not know why the BJP is arguing on this. I don't understand .....*(Interruptions)*.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want you fo put your question .....*(Interruptions)*.....

MR. SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHA JIRAO SHINDE: It has got rele vance. The Committee was appointed after this incident had taken place and not before that and so, it is relevant. You cannot forget that ..... *(Interruptions)* .....

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATA-RAJAN: Yesterday, they accused me of interfering..... *(Interruptions)*.....

श्री सुशीलकुमार संभाजीवार शिन्दे: दूसरी बात इस रिफरेंस में यह बताना चाहता हूं कि जो यूरोपियन बार अम्बेसडर्स को हमारे यहां वैली में जाने की जो सुविधा भारत सरकार ने उपलब्ध करा दी तो मैं उसके लिए उनको .....(धन्यवाद)

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, is that his question? ..... *(Interruptions)*....